

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheet of replacement drawings includes adding the “Prior Art” labeling to Figure 5. This sheet includes Figures 3, 4 and 5 and replaces the original drawing sheet including Figures 3, 4 and 5.

Attachment: One Replacement Drawing Sheet

REMARKS

Claims 13 to 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention. Claims 13 to 15, 18 to 20, 23 and 24, were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Maucher (US 5,632,365). Claims 16, 17, 21 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Maucher (US 5,632,365) in view of Reik et al. (US 2002/0038749).

The specification has been amended.

The drawings have been amended.

Claim 13 has been amended.

Reconsideration of the application based on the following remarks is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. §112 Rejections

Claims 13 to 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention.

The Office Action states that in line 7 of claim 13, “a pressure plate” is defined, but it is unclear whether this is the same as or in addition to the pressure plate already defined in line 3 of the claim.

Claim 13 has been amended to clarify the pressure plate reference.

The Office Action states that in line 14 of claim 13, the intended meaning of the expression “adapted to a magnitude of the force of the linear compensating spring” is unclear.

As clear from the specification at [0031], for example, and Figures 5 and 6, the spring force F_{TF} is adapted to the magnitude of force of the linear compensating spring. As seen in Figure 5, the line I is at zero while the line III (F_{KO}) starts at about 300 Newtons. With the present invention, the line I is adapted via the spring force to be within the magnitude of F_{KO} . The specification has been amended for clarity, support being found in Figures 5 and 6 and [0031], for example. Claim 13 has been amended to recite “the spring force being within an order of magnitude of the force of the linear compensating spring.”

Claim 13, as amended, is respectfully submitted as clear, and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and its dependent claims is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. §102(b) Rejections

Claims 13 to 15, 18 to 20, 23 and 24, were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Maucher (US 5,632,365).

Maucher discloses a friction clutch comprising: a housing or cover adapted to rotate about a predetermined axis, means for rotating the housing including a counterpressure plate and a pressure plate which is coaxial and rotatable with and is disposed between the housing and the counterpressure plate moveable in the direction of the common axis. The friction clutch further comprises a clutch disc which is coaxial with friction lining subject to wear, means for engaging the clutch which includes at least one clutch spring, and means for reducing bias of the at least one clutch spring upon the pressure plate to disengage the clutch. (Col. 3, Lines 49 to 67 through Col. 4, Lines 1 to 7).

Claim 13 has been amended to recite “a clutch assembly comprising:

a clutch including a clutch lining having a springiness;

a pressure plate configured to engage the clutch, the pressure plate being axially moveable against a force of the springiness of the lining;

a clutch-release system;

a release bearing;

a lever plate supported in a peripheral region and transmitting with leverage a release force to the pressure plate, the release force being applied by the clutch-release system to the release bearing; and

a clutch actuator having a linear compensating spring and exerting an actuating force on the release bearing, the actuating force being amplified by a force of the linear compensating spring,

wherein a spring force acts on the lever plate in a direction of the force of the springiness of the lining, the spring force being within an order of magnitude of the force of the linear compensating spring.” Support found in specification [0031], for example.

Maucher fails to teach or show “a clutch actuator having a linear compensating spring and exerting an actuating force on the release bearing,” as recited in claim 13. There is no linear compensating spring in Maucher.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 13 and its dependent claims is respectfully submitted.

35 U.S.C. §103 (a)

Claims 16, 17, 21 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Maucher (US 5, 632, 365) in view of Reik et al. (US 2002/0038749).

Maucher is discussed above.

Reik et al. discloses a self adjusting friction clutch wherein

the pressure plate is non-rotatably connected to a rotary housing so that it can perform limited axial movements relative to the housing, and wherein the clutch disc or plate can be clamped between the pressure plate and the counterpressure plate under the action of the diaphragm spring which bears against the pressure plate in the engaged condition of the friction clutch.

(Page 1, Paragraph [0002]).

In view of the comments with respect to claim 13, withdrawal of the rejections to claims 16, 17, 21 and 22 is respectfully requested.

Furthermore there is no motivation to combine Maucher and Reik et al.

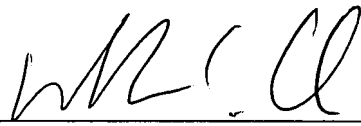
CONCLUSION

It is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and applicants respectfully request such action.

If any additional fees are deemed to be due at this time, the Assistant Commissioner is authorized to charge payment of the same to Deposit Account No. 50-0552.

Respectfully submitted,

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